1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

widows and divorcées have a slightly higher status than widows, but this does not entitle them to be classed as *garatis*.

The Coorg widow's dress consists of a white cotton *sari*, a white cotton blouse, and a white cotton scarf. *None* of these clothes may have a coloured border. The corpse of a widow, too, is dressed in clothes without a coloured border. The corpse of a married woman, on the other hand, is dressed in a coloured *sari* with a coloured, or silver, or gold, border.

The distinction between a widow and married woman is absolutely fundamental in every part of south India. Married women have a great number of privileges, whereas widows have a great number of ritual disabilities. A married woman is auspicious, she is everywhere welcome, whereas a widow is inauspicious, and she is unwelcome everywhere. This deep cleavage expresses itself in the matter of dress also.

IX

After being dressed in ritual robes, the subject of *mangala* salutes the various lamps in the house before sitting down for *mūrta*. On either side of him is a dish-lamp placed on a tripod stool. The dish-lamp is indispensable on every ritual occasion.

Every day, early in the morning and again just before nightfall, the housewife sweeps the house and sprinkles it with a purifying solution of cow-dung. She then lights the wall-lamp and salutes it. While saluting it she prays to the ancestors of the *okka*, to Mother Kāvēri and Shiva. Every member of the *okka* salutes the wall-lamp after getting up in the morning, and again at night.

The ending of night as well as of day is marked by sweeping and purifying the house, and by lighting and saluting the wall-lamp. The period between the ending of the day and the beginning of night is regarded as a critical time, and children are not given food or allowed to sleep at that time. This is a common south Indian custom.

It is regarded as a bad omen if the lamp goes out while a Coorg is having his dinner. The sudden extinction of the lamp indicates the approach of disaster. The diner gets up from his meal, cleans the dish and washes his hands. He sits down to dinner again a few minutes later. This makes it a different meal altogether and not the one that was interrupted.

1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

A Coorg never says that a lamp has gone out. He says instead, 784
'the lamp is brighter' (*bolicha dumb pōchi*). This kind of euphemism 354
is employed on other occasions also: the Kodagi word for a tiger is '*nari*' which means a jackal in every other Dravidian language.

Again, no Coorg says that 'a cobra has bitten So-and-so'. He says instead, 'a creeper has bitten So-and-so'. Finally, after nightfall no one mentions the barber. If they have to refer to him they say instead, 'the scraper of heads'. Amongst the Hindus in Mysore the barber is referred to after nightfall as 'one whose name may not be mentioned'. A barber is inauspicious, and contact with him is [305]
defiling. He is also associated with inauspicious occasions such as death, as mourners have to be shaved. Women specially dread the barber, as until recently among the highest castes widows were required to have their heads shaved entirely.

In every one of the cases we have mentioned circumlocution is employed to avoid reference to an unpleasant object or event. The bite of a snake is always unpleasant and frequently fatal; a barber suggests death and widowhood; and it is much better to think of a tiger as a jackal. The euphemistic reference to the extinction of a [596]
lamp has a similar purpose: a lamp is the symbol of the solidarity and strength of the *okka*, and its sudden extinction refers to the decay and extinction of the *okka*. It also refers to the withdrawal of [782]
the protective power of the ancestors and the deities who are invoked while saluting a lamp.

Among the Hindus of the eastern plains it is obligatory to light a 788
lamp in the house as soon as it is dark. A house without a lamp 354
suggests that everyone is dead in the house, or that they are too poor to light one.

The ritual attitude prevalent towards the domestic lamp is easily [171]
extended to fire generally, and to the sun. These again provide [821]
points of contact with Sanskritic or All-India Hinduism.

The kitchen stove is a convenient focus for the general ritual 372
attitude existing towards fire. The kitchen stove, like the domestic 596
lamp, stands for the unity, strength, and protective power of the *okka* and this fact finds ritual expression. When a member of the [764]
okka is dead and it is decided to cremate his body, the funeral pyre is fired with a torch lighted from embers from the kitchen stove. The torch is made with twigs collected from the domestic burial-ground.

The belief in the protective power of *teli ntr* is again the result of 372
783

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Several competitions are held on the village green. The men are asked to shoot at a target (*kuri*). A variant of this is shooting at a target while running (*ōṭu boḍi*). Three stout plantain stems are planted very close to each other and men are invited to cut through them with one stroke of the Coorg sword. Coorg youths struggle for the possession of a coconut (*téngé pōré*). There is a high-jump competition, and then there is a form of putting-the-shot: the competitors are required to throw a round stone backwards over their heads. He who throws it farthest wins.

All the adult males in every *okka* in the village or *nāḍ* have to co-operate in the collective hunt that is held after the 'festival of arms'. Each *okka* takes its dogs to the hunt. Every *dog* gets a portion of the meat of the animal killed. Every man taking part in the hunt gets a share, and those who hit the game first and second get an extra share each. He who first hit the game is also entitled to the animal's head, while the one who was the first to touch the killed animal's tail is given one of the front legs in addition to his ordinary share.

A man who shoots at an animal must not only hit it, but must draw blood as well. Blood, in this context, is referred to as *nambigé*, which means evidence. Failure to draw blood is punished: thorns are drawn across the bare buttocks of the unfortunate hunter before the assembled members of the hunt.

It was mentioned earlier that a man who killed a panther was entitled to have *nari mangala* performed on the village green, whereas he who killed a tiger was entitled to have it done on the *nāḍ* green.

It was pointed out earlier that Ayyappa, the son of Vishnu and Shiva, becomes the hunting god *par excellence* in Coorg, roaming the forests at night, whistling to his pack of dogs. Vows are made to him before a hunt, and offerings of clay images of dogs and horses are made before his shrines in the jungle.

The general preference for the martial way of life expresses itself in belief, ritual, and myth. For instance, the Sanskritic belief that an eclipse is caused when the serpent Rāhu tries to devour the sun or moon provides the basis for a characteristically Coorg story. A one-eyed cobra lived in an anthill and near by was a creeper which had put forth an enormous gourd in which lived a hare. A strong wind blew the gourd off the creeper, and it broke when it hit the ground, setting the hare free. The cobra went after the running hare,

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trying to catch it. It chased the hare round the world. The moon was watching the chase from above and he dropped a rope to help the poor hare. The latter promptly climbed up the rope and settled down in the moon's lap. The cobra tries to catch its prey periodically, and whenever it does so, an eclipse occurs. When an eclipse is in progress Coorgs shout, 'O one-eyed Siddappa (cobra), set free, set free.' They shoot at the sky to make the cobra disgorge the hare.

The martial orientation of Coorg culture is not a recent phenomenon, nor does it seem to be in danger of dying out: in the last war over 1,300 Coorgs enlisted as soldiers, and the first Indian Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army, General K. M. Cariappa, is a Coorg.

The *sanyasi*, the man who has renounced the world to pursue a life of prayer and contemplation, commands very great respect among Coorgs. He leads a celibate life, and in his case bachelordom does not constitute a drawback. The rules which apply to ordinary men do not apply to him. Preference for the *sanyasi* is found everywhere in India among Hindus.

seedlings together, keeping a regular interval of six inches. Before the completion of the largest field, an open space of about ten feet wide is left throughout the whole length. This is the Coorg race-ground, offering good sport which greatly enlivens their monotonous work. From the men employed in work, fifteen are selected for the race on 100 bunties of land. Wearing a pair of short drawers they are eager for the run for which their strong legs qualify them. The signal is given and away they scramble, plunge, and splutter in deep mud, roars of laughter greeting the unfortunate persons who sink in. Having reached the opposite bank, they return in the same way struggling to the winning post. Four or five only win the race. The first-comer is rewarded with a piece of cloth, the second with a bunch of plantains, the third with a jack-fruit, the fourth with a bunch of oranges, and the fifth with parched rice. When all the fields are planted, a feast is given by the landlord.

As a protection against the evil eye, some half-burnt bamboos about six feet long are erected in a line through the middle of the fields. It is now the farmer's business to regulate the water supply of each field, and to fill up the holes made by crabs in the embankments. The weeding is then attended to and failures replanted. At the end of October, when the ears of corn are fully out, small huts on high posts are erected, one for every hundred bunties, for the watchman who guards the crop against wild animals and at times fires a gun to scare them away. In November and December the paddy ripens, and the feast of the first fruits or Huttari is celebrated, after which the paddy may be reaped. The water is drained off the fields. The paddy is then cut down with a sickle close to the ground and then spread out to dry. After six or eight days it is bound into sheaves, carried home, and stacked in a heap, the ears turned inside. In January or February, chiefly in moonlit nights, the sheaves are taken to the threshing floor, spread round a stone pillar in the middle, and trod out by bullocks and buffaloes, when the paddy is winnowed. The best quality is reserved for seed and the rest stored for consumption or sale.

Cardamom Cultivation

The cultivation of cardamoms was formerly second in importance to that of rice, and a fine cardamom jungle at an elevation of 3,000 to 5,000 feet was regarded as a great asset. Cardamom grows in evergreen jungle at an elevation of 3,000 to 5,000 feet, but it requires subdued light for its growth. This is obtained by the felling of trees which let in light. February or March is the time for this, and the shaking of the ground causes the young plants to shoot up in three months. The capsules appear in the third year, and ripen in September or October, when the crop is gathered. A good crop is gathered for seven years, when the felling of another big

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AWS Coorg AWS

778 Besides the many groves set apart in each Nád for some object of worship, but chiefly for *Ayappa-dévaru*, there are some extensive forests, called *Dévara-kádu*, which are untrodden by human foot and superstitiously reserved for the abodes or hunting grounds of deified heroic ancestors. These forests are: the *Iggudappa-dévara-kádu* in Pádinalknád, the *Chómamále* in Katiednád and the *Iruli-bane* in Kuyingherinád.

821 Another annual sacrifice every house has to offer to a
776 peculiar divinity called *Gulika*. This is an invisible constel-
782 lation or star, belonging both to the order of planets and to
that of the zodiacal stars (it is, as the people say, a son of
[791] Shani or Saturn). No mortal eye sees it. The astrologer only knows the Gulika and its power, especially over the sick. A stone is placed for the Gulika at the foot of some tree possessed of a milky juice. There the Coorg offers every year fowls, cocoanuts and a little brandy in a dish of plantain-
[961] leaves to his tutelary numem. In cases of frequent deaths in a family, a second Gulika, called *Mrityu-Gulika* (death-gulika) is worshipped.

778 Another object of solemn ceremonies are the *Nátas*, the
825 spots on which cobra capellas have finished their course of terrestrial life. According to Coorg lore, the cobra capella I A lives a thousand years! When it has passed the meridian of its long life, its body begins to shrink and to brighten, till it shines like silver, and measures three feet or less at the age of six or seven hundred years. Still later, the reptile shines like gold, and is only one foot in length. At last it shrinks to the size of a finger. Then it will some day fly up high into the air, die and sink down upon the ground, where it disappears altogether. No man sees it, but, of course, the
[791] Kanya knows the important secret, which he will communi-
[753] cate for a consideration to the proprietor of the land. Should any human being, unaware, set foot upon the hallowed spot, incurable disease of the skin will break out upon his person,

I A [Errata: This should read "cobra di capella." See Corrigenda, Cat. 116, p. 493, — Analyst]